



## 1.0 Introduction

This note outlines discussions had at the fourth West Midlands Greener Together Forum on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023, where we discussed natural environment projects. The Forum brought together speakers from the WMCA and Castle Bromwich Gardens.

**Biodiversity and the Climate Crisis** - Mike Webb, Natural Capital Programme Manager, WMCA

**The West Midlands Walking Trail** - Matthew Griffin, Environment Programme Support Officer, WMCA

**The West Midlands Forest Partnership** - Jeff Grant, Forest Partnership Coordinator, WMCA

**Community Environment Fund** - Tony Thapar, Community Environment Fund Manager, WMCA

**Our Community Green Grant Project** - Olly Pickering, Castle Bromwich Gardens

Please see the presentations from the meeting [here](#) and the Forum Terms of Reference [here](#).

## 2.0 Key points

**2.1** The Community Environment Fund is open for applications from community and charitable organisations on the following topics: access to greenspace, improving nature, climate adaptation, circular economy and climate education. Send in an expression of interest and the WMCA team will get in touch to provide support with your application.

2.1.1 The Community Green Grants fund ran by the WMCA from 2021-23 gave £720k to projects. Castle Bromwich Gardens in Solihull have used their grant to improve a neglected grassland and this year have seen reed warblers for the first time in 30 years.

**2.2** Tree giveaways are live for the 2023-24 tree planting season. If you have an event between November – March, the WMCA can attend your event to give people trees, or you can be given trees to plant. Apply for free trees online.

2.2.1 Birmingham Tree People are working in Nechells through the Urban Forest Accelerator project to provide trees in tree deprived areas.

2.2.2 Noted that the WMCA should engage with young farmers and the cadets with nature projects.

**2.3** West Midlands Walking Trail is being drafted to create a regional walkway around the West Midlands, with inner city loops. The WMCA hope to apply for the Heritage Lottery Fund to support with promoting the walkway. Existing paths will be used, and the route will be as accessible as possible

2.3.1 Noted that current walkways are not very accessible with stiles and the Staffordshire Railway walk in Dudley – Wolverhampton is currently not maintained well.

## 4.0 Community Updates

**4.1 Active Wellbeing Society** have an open day on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at Manor House, Hay Hall Business Park, Redfern Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, B11 2BE. Open to all.

**Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens** are holding a Wassail on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024 in their orchard. [Sign up to attend.](#)

**This briefing note will be shared with the WMCA's Energy and Environment board at the next board meeting.**

